

Arizona Invasive Species Advisory Council

Research & Information Management Working Group

Thursday, September 6, 2007 Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Kai Umeda (U of A Cooperative Extension; Co-lead)
Chasa O'Brien (AGFD; Co-lead)
Ed Northam (Southwest Vegetation Management Group)
Brian Moorhead (Salt River Project)
Bill Werner (ADWR)
Kathryn Thomas (US Geological Survey)
John Brock (ASU East)
Barron Orr (U of A Cooperative Extension)
Marianne Meding (AGFD)
Fred Amator (AZ Crop Protection Assoc.)
L.D. Walker (BLM) via teleconference

Meeting Minutes:

The Arizona Invasive Species Advisory Council Research and Information Management Working Group was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on September 6th, 2007 at the State Land Department Conference Room 215 located at 1616 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

The group reviewed the meeting minutes from August 27, 2007, and identified editorial changes. Co-lead Kai Umeda called for a motion to approve the minutes with the identified edits. John Brock motioned, and Ed Northam seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously with edits.

Kai reviewed activities from the past meetings and commented that the group had spent a good amount of time brainstorming and covered a lot of territory on ideas for doing research. He indicated that it is time to start to develop recommendations and fill in all the objectives in the charter matrix template that we have. He directed the group use recommendations identified in prior meeting discussions and to work towards answering the questions in order to meet the October deadline for a final draft to be presented to the Council. He expressed his hope of addressing a good amount of the charter at this meeting. He directed group members to refer to their charter and begin to address Objective 1; specifically get through identifying a process including identification of criteria for prioritizing research needs.

The group took a few moments to read through Charter Objective 1. Kai indicated that the group could take it in a couple of different directions: 1) identify the research needs prioritization process and the list of criteria, or 2) identify representation for a task team that would be doing that work.

Kai indicated that he and Ed Northam had discussed federal, state, local, county, private, and public entities coming together; the group would encompass about forty members that would provide guidance for identifying research needs. Kai indicated a concern that a group of that size would have a difficult time coming to consensus on prioritization, and posed a question of how to whittle down to get to the nitty gritty? Who is that critical group who could make a decision about priorities of organisms?

Marianne Meding made a recommendation that since at the August 27th meeting the group developed several criteria that would be important to use as criteria for prioritizing research priorities, that perhaps the group should focus on Charter objective 1a and further develop what that process should look like.

The group then reviewed the criteria that were listed in the August 27th minutes and identified 4 primary criteria:

- Economic
- Ecological
- Human Health
- Research need

There was some discussion on what each of these 4 criteria encompassed. There was a question as to whether distribution and potential for spread is covered by one of the 4 identified criteria, and the group agreed that they would be included in Ecological threats. The group decided that the criteria should be further identified as having negative effects on each of the 4 categories.

LD Walker identified the need to include restoration ability, and the group indicated this would be covered under the ecological impact criteria.

Kai indicated that the objective is to set up objective criteria so that a priority list is established and so that subjective bias is removed.

Chasa O'Brien indicated that prioritization process, whether it's a scoring process, or a ranking process, will identify priorities for research. The group discussed the need to weight the 4 categories appropriately so that a category such as human health will rank higher in priority than the others, for example, because threats to human health should rank high. The group discussed whether to rank as high, medium, or low priority, or to have a list of the top 10 research needs. They also discussed whether to break the list into 2 lists, one for those species already present, and one for those not yet present, but posing an imminent/future threat. A question arose on how to treat species for which there is not enough information. The group decided that this could be one of the questions asked in the 'research needs' criteria.

The group decided that a 1-10 scoring range could be used, and would provide sufficient range to rank species and not have them all score similarly. An alternative prioritization process including a pair wise comparison of all the species was discussed. The group decided a scoring process would be more efficient because when a new

species is added to the list to be ranked, the entire pair-wise ranking doesn't need to re-occur, rather that individual species can be ranked and the list will adjust appropriately.

The need to account for the level of existing research that is already being funded was discussed. The group also discussed the need to evaluate the impact proposed research would have on management. The desire is to allocate funds in the areas where the impacts would be greatest. There is a need to make sure that money's getting spent on the things that are important to the State

The group identified the need to further outline the 4 major prioritization criteria and better define them.

The group defined research as not being limited to hypothesis testing, that it also includes monitoring, and literature reviews.

The group discussed also weighting research priorities differently for those species that are already here, and those that are anticipated to arrive. The group discussed whether there needs to be two separate pots of money to address these to areas separately.

The group discussed that the list of research needs should be dynamic, and that prioritization might be a yearly event that will have to stay ahead of declaring emergencies. This process will hopefully anticipate potential problems in time to avert emergency calls and allow for proactive on the ground responses. So that's why the prioritization process would have to be dynamic and always be changing over time as it moves on. Some species may fall off the list as others are added. Some species may stay on the list for a long time.

The group discussed the need to have 1 prioritized list that includes both present and anticipated species, and also 2 separate lists, one for species present in AZ, and one for those whose arrival may be imminent.

The group discussed the need to provide a recommendation on how research needs will continue to be prioritized in the future. The concept of surveying subject matter experts and soliciting input from researchers and managers on a regular basis to develop a list of species which would then be prioritized was discussed.

There was confusion on who would be conducting actual prioritization. There were several alternatives – a separate task team, the Research and Information Management work group itself, or the Arizona Invasive Species Advisory Council.

The charter was revisited and it was clarified that the Research and Information Management group would not be responsible for coming up with an actual list of species, but rather for creating a process for determining a list of invasive species, and determining a process for conducting the prioritization of research needs

The link between creating a list of prioritized research needs and then using that list to

grant funding for research projects was made.

Marianne reminded the group that their role and responsibility is to make a recommendation on the membership of group of individuals who are going to review current and past research efforts and develop a prioritized list of future research needs. The task of the Research and Information Management group is to identify what that prioritization process is going to look like and who is going to be responsible for carrying out that process, and what the frequency or the prioritization process will be.

The group then revisited the prioritization process and discussed the use of 'red flags' for also identifying research needs that don't come up as a high priority, but are still important on a smaller scale. The group also discussed the need to ensure that the prioritization process will be objective.

Group members volunteered to be responsible for beginning to incorporate recommendations discussed in the meetings into the management plan template for the Research and Information Management component as follows:

Charter Objective 6: Chasa O'Brien & Marianne Meding

Charter Objective 7: Ed Northam

Charter Objective 8: Kai Umeda

Charter Objective 9: Brian Moorhead & Kai Umeda

Future Meeting Dates:

The group decided to meet on a weekly basis in order to meet the October deadline for having a final draft of recommendations for Council review:

September 13th at 8:30 am at the U of A Cooperative extension Office

September 20th at 8:30 am at the U of A Cooperative extension Office

September 27th at 1:30 pm at the U of A Cooperative extension Office

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm.